

Many distinguished men whose presence had enhanced the interest and shed lustre over previous councils were absent. Dr. Blaikie, in his opening address, made touching allusion to many of them who were not suffered to continue by reason of death. Others, perhaps equally distinguished, who were at one time expected, were unable, from various causes, to be present. But whether called to higher service, or detained by other causes, the absence of such men as Cairns, Donald Fraser, Bersier, Pressense, Howard Crosby, Pröchet, McCosh, Patton, Moses Hoge, Oswald Dykes, and Marshall Lang could not but leave a blank. They were missed, but it cannot be said that there was any falling off in the average ability of the papers, or in the vigor of the discussions. From the opening sermon to the closing addresses, a very high level was sustained. The range of questions discussed was wide, but it was quite evident that the members of the council were well abreast of the age, and able to discuss intelligently the important themes which they handled.

The prominence given to the aggressive work of the church, in its various departments, is only what should be expected from a body of men alive to the responsibilities of the Christian church. It is nevertheless a sign of the times in which we live that such topics came to the front, and excited the deepest interest. Half a century ago, home and foreign missions could not have drawn such audiences for successive days. The speakers, doubtless, were an attraction; but the subjects they handled had a special interest for the people. We must regard it as a token that the heart of the church is beginning to beat responsive to the heart of Christ when these topics could excite such sustained interest. Foreign missions justly held a prominent place in the council, and must have received an impulse from the discussions. Influential workers like Ellinwood, Lindsay, Somerville, Swanson Park, and Griffith Ellis made themselves felt. The foreign missionary force was represented by a large band of faithful laborers, some of them men of wide reputation and real power. Paton, from the New Hebrides; Laws, from Livingstonia; Dennis, from Beirut; Macdonald, from Calcutta; McKichan, from Bombay; Mateer, from Shantung; Wilson, from Neemuch; Underwood, from Korea, and others, were there to rehearse the triumphs of the Gospel, or cast on missionary problems the lights of experience.